

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
TRSE-00 MC-02 AID-05 ACDA-07 EB-07 COME-00 EUR-12
ERDA-05 /095 W

----- 125620 /73

R 141008Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9041
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 12746

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IN
SUBJECT: A-4 SALE

REF: STATE 299613

1. DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR THE AMERICAS, DR. KHURSHID HYDER, CALLED IN THE CHARGE ON DECEMBER 14 TO DISCUSS PRESS REPORTS ALLEGING THE POSSIBLE SALE OF A-4S TO INDIA. MFA HAD PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED A COPY OF THE PRESS GUIDANCE PROVIDED IN REFTEL AND, ACCORDING TO DR. HYDER, HAD ALSO BEEN INFORMED BY THE PAK EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON OF THE DEPARTMENT'S CLARIFICATION OF THE "SENSATIONALIZED" ACCOUNT IN THE WASHINGTON POST.
 2. WHILE ACCEPTING THE USG EXPLANATION, DR. HYDER SAID THAT SHE WANTED TO REGISTER IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THE GOP'S GREAT CONCERN THAT SOME OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON MIGHT IN THE FUTURE RECOMMEND SALE OF A-4S OR OTHER MAJOR EQUIPMENT TO INDIA. DR. HYDER SAID THAT SUCH SALES WOULD AGGRAVATE THE PRESENT OVERWHELMING MILITARY IMBALANCE IN SOUTH ASIA TO PAKISTAN'S GREAT DISADVANTAGE. NOTING INDIA'S INDIGENOUS ARMS CAPABILITY AND SUPPLIES OF SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT FROM THE SOVIET UNION, DR. HYDER ASSERTED THAT AMERICAN SALES WOULD HAVE AN EXTREMELY DAMAGING IMPACT ON SOUTH ASIAN STABILITY AND ON RELATIONS BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND THE US. DR. HYDER SAID THAT SHE HOPED THE USG WOULD NOT BE DELUDED INTO THINKING THAT MILITARY SALES
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TO INDIA WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN WEANING INDIA AWAY

FROM ITS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION. IN THE VIEW OF PAKISTAN, INDIA IS, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, DEPENDENT ON THE SOVIET UNION FOR SECURITY SUPPORT AND COULD NOT BE BOUGHT OFF FROM THAT DEPENDENCE SIMPLY BY THE PROVISION OF SOME US MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

3. THE CHARGE REITERATED THE PRESS GUIDANCE IN REFTEL AND EMPHASIZED THAT THERE IS NEITHER A GOI REQUEST FOR THE A-4 NOR ANY COMMITMENT BY THE USG TO SELL IT.

4. DR. HYDER THEN NOTED THE SOVIET SALE OF HEAVY WATER TO THE GOI AS AN EXAMPLE OF INDIAN DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR AND OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO SUPPORT INDIA, EVEN IN CONTRADICTION OF GENERAL SOVIET POLICY ON NON-PROLIFERATION. DR. HYDER GENTLY DREW AN INVIDIOUS COMPARISON BETWEEN SOVIET ACTION ON HEAVY WATER AND US PRESSURE AGAINST THE PLANS OF ITS PAKISTANI ALLY FOR A REPROCESSING PLANT.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THE GOP IS PROBABLY SATISFIED THAT THERE ARE NO IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR AN A-4 SALE TO INDIA, DR. HYDER'S RATHER STRONG DEMARCHE REFLECTS GOP CONCERN IN THIS TRANSITION PERIOD OVER THE POLICIES THE NEW ADMINISTRATION MAY PURSUE IN SOUTH ASIA, PARTICULARLY THOSE POLICIES THAT MIGHT BE DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN INDO-US RELATIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY AIRCRAFT, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, AIRCRAFT SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ISLAMA12746
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760460-0756
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761245/aaaabmyg.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 299613
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 JUN 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <15 OCT 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: A-4 SALE
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, PK, IN, (HYDER, KHURSHID)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006